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STRAIGHT TALK.

WHEN ELIHU ROOT speaks to men in these troublesome times they give heed to what he says. His countrymen have come to believe that he represents the very best thought of the nation. There was a day when he was grievously misunderstood; when he was popularly regarded as a reactionary of the worst type, a corporation hireling, a public servant without conscience, an intellectual aristocrat of narrow vision and no sympathy for the rights of the rank and file of his fellow men. Happily, all this is changed; the false impression has been corrected, and Americans no longer refer to their previous estimate of the man, save to make apologies for their mistake. It is fortunate for the veteran statesman that he should live to reap the rightful regard of his country, and it is doubly fortunate for his fellow citizens that they should come to hold him in the highest estimation at a time when he is performing a matchless service to the Republic.

It is given to no other one man of this generation to speak with such freedom from partisanship and such fearlessness of purpose as this distinguished American. A private citizen, in voluntary retirement from public life and with no personal end to gain save to do his duty to his country as he finds it to do, he looms large on the horizon of national and international affairs and personifies the highest type of citizenship that the Republic has developed. Rich in experience and with rare insight of the drift of affairs that are changing the whole complexion of the civilized world; his utterances now fall upon open ears, and men have come to carefully weigh his words. So it is that he is able to speak frankly to his countrymen and when he chides them for their short-comings they no longer mock him as a carping critic. His warnings strike home.

When a crisis comes upon a nation the exigencies of the hour require that some man shall arise and lay bare the situation. It is not a pleasant task to remind a great people of their inconsistencies and indifference to duty, and only a man bearing an inspired message may hope to gain respectful attention. This is Elihu Root's mission and he is performing it with a delicacy, yet decisiveness, that is truly remarkable. When America went to war to make the world safe for democracy, he was selected to carry our pledge of moral and material support to the newborn republic of Russia. That mission performed, he returned home bearing a message of his own accord that prompts all honest Americans to blush for shame.

We are reminded not to concern ourselves with Russia but to take stock of our own situation at home. We are told that the new republic is meeting the extraordinary demands of the moment more satisfactorily than are we, and that Russia is accomplishing her drastic reforms in shorter order and with less discord than is America. When we feel inclined to criticize the internal dissension of our Russian ally, we are admonished of our own race riots, I. W. W. agitators, suffragist propaganda, pacifist movements, political maneuvering, opposition to the draft and countless claims for exemption from military service.

And we are three thousand miles away while Russia is invaded by the hordes of the enemy and put to the additional task of holding two million men at bay. Mr. Root quite aptly puts the question: what would America be able to do in a similar situation? It requires supreme courage to criticize one's own country in such a crisis, but

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